

Amphw (14) K THE *11 Feb*
Bishop of LONDON's Tenth
CONFERENCE
WITH HIS *449. 6. 21*
CLERGY,

UPON *the*
The KING's Directions to the
ARCHBISHOPS and BISHOPS,
FOR THE
Preserving of Unity in the *Church*, and
the Purity of the *Christian Faith* con-
cerning the

HOLY TRINITY;

February the 3d. 1698.

Held in the Years 1697. and 1698.

London: Printed by Benj. Motte, 1701.

THE
BISHOP of LONDON'S TENCH
CONFERENCE
WITH HIS
CLERGY.

UPON
The KING'S Directions to the
ARCHBISHOPS and BISHOPS,
FOR THE
Preserving of Unity in the Church, and
the Purity of the Christian Faith con-
cerning the

HOLY TRINITY;
February the 3d. 1693.
Held in the Years 1697. and 1698.

London: Printed by R. Motte. 1701.

[1]

It must needs therefore have been a great Satisfaction to us all upon this Conference, to find so unanimous a Consent to every Head of these Propositions, and to clear Expressions of our just Indignation against those heretical, schismatical, Popish, For when the Spirit, that is the whole Power, of Christ is in us, as that of a King, when his power is destroyed, as that of a King, when his power is destroyed.

THE
Bishop of LONDON's Tenth
CONFERENCE
WITH HIS
CLERGY, &c.

NO Prince can act the Part of a nursing Father to the *Church of Christ* better, than by suppressing such *Heresies*, as strike at the Root of our Religion: And this has His Majesty done, by his Directions against the ver-
tical Point of the *Socinian* Principles. For to deny the Divinity of our Blessed Saviour and the Holy Ghost, is to stop up our Way to Heaven, and leave us yet in our Sins. Justification and Sanctification would remain purely nominal, in case Christ had not a Power in himself to lay down his Life, and to take it up again for our Redemption, and the Holy Ghost were not every where to help in time of need.

It must needs therefore have been a great Satisfaction to us all upon this Conference, to find so unanimous a Consent to every Head of these Directions, and so clear Expressions of our just Indignation against those heretical, or rather apostatical, Doctrines. For when the Spirit, that is, the whole Power, of Christianity is exhausted, the Being of it is as much destroy'd; as that of a Man, when his Soul is departed. But when the overweening Opinion of our own Accomplishments has once possessed our Minds, the false Flashes of such Conceits, like an *ignis fatuus*, leads us into all Errour; so dazzling our Eyes, that we cannot discover our miserable Defects. We fancy our selves to be rich, and clothed, and to abound in all Things; whilst we are indeed poor and naked, and have nothing. Which is a Blindness of a most desperate Nature. For *Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him.* But to proceed according to the Directions laid before us, we have,

I. A Caution given us, as to the handling of those great Points.

II. A Command to repress and restrain the exorbitant Practices of the Assertors of Socinianism.

I. The first Part is of absolute necessity to make the latter successful. For if we be not very careful and circumspect how we treat of these matters, we shall lay our selves open to so many Cavils and Exceptions, that we shall be engaged in endless Disputes about Words, without

without ever coming to the Question; and too often raise such Differences amongst our selves, as to set up a Triumph for our Adversaries, out of our own Miscarriages. For the avoiding of which Inconveniences, we are directed,

1. To deliver no other Doctrine concerning the Blessed Trinity, than what is contain'd in the Holy Scriptures, and is agreeable to the three Creeds and nine and thirty Articles of Religion; for the Support of which, there is no difficulty of finding positive Texts. So that the Nature and Manner of it is there expressed, as far as in Modesty the unfolding so great a Mystery can be allow'd. Neither would the Church ever have adventured to go so far, had not the perverse Cavillings of Hereticks forced her to these explanatory Terms, thereby to lay open the Fallacies and Falsities of their deceitful Glosses upon more general Words. Wherefore it would be too audacious as well as dangerous for any private Person to transgress those Bounds, which the Church herself has not adventured to extend farther, than she was constrained to do for the Preservation of sound Doctrine. Upon which account we are,

2. Carefully to avoid all new Terms or Notions in the handling of this Doctrine, and confine our selves to the usual Expressions of the Church. To do otherwise in so high and unfathomable a Point, would be too bold an Attempt, and might sometimes endanger running our selves, through Unskillfulness or daring Presumption, into that Heresie, from which we would seem, and perchance really intend, to flee. To be sure it portends Mischiefe every way. For it gives Occasion to multiply Disputes, and administers new mat-

ter of cavilling to our Adversaries ; and may shake the Faith of many, by raising such Difficulties, as from the Nature of the Subject may be indissoluble. And,

3. That we offend not against the fifty third Canon, which forbids Opposition between Preachers ; and not to use scurrilous Language or bitter Invectives against any Person whatever ; that is, neither to quarrel among our selves, nor use railing Accusations against those that oppose us. The former Caution is for our Preservation,

Matt. 12. 25.

*Quiescant mo-
neo & desi-
nant maledi-
cere, maledi-
sta ne noscant
sua. Tert.
Prov. 18. 6.*

for *Every city or house divided against it self shall not stand ;* and the other is for our Credit and Reputation, because it is the Character of a vain and rash Man to be contentious, *A Fools lips enter into contention, and his mouth calls for strokes.*

Thus are we most wisely directed how to behave our selves, when we treat of such high Points, of which we can have no just Conception by the light of Nature, nor after they are reveal'd, give any convincing Reason for them, besides the Word of God. And it were an Indignity offer'd to the Truth of God, to expect an Account how such a thing can be, to which he has already given his Testimony, that it is. Therefore a modest and humble Consent to the Truth of that, which we find in Gods Word, is the safest and wisest Course we can take. For *The secret things belong unto the Lord our God.* The Reason and Account of things are many times, as in this Particular, of so abstruse a Nature, and so forein to the Constitution of Flesh and Blood, that to search after them were but lost Labour, in confounding our Understanding about things which are infinitely too high for us.

Leut. 29. 29.

*utator ma-
tatis oppri-
etur à gloria.*

But

But we must not therefore conceive our selves free from the Obligation of believing it, because we cannot comprehend the manner of it, or at least reduce it to a Speculative Piece of Ornament to our Religion, which may be laid aside without imparing the Substance. For it is as much as our Religion is worth, to lay aside this Doctrine. Let us not deceive our selves: God has not discover'd so great a Myſtery to us, only that we should be amused with the Contemplation of it. It were too great a Diminution to the glorious Dispensation of the Gospel, to think so. That sort of Exercise will suit better with our future State: whilst we remain in our earthly Tabernacle, we must be working out our Salvation. For the Condition of this World is such, made up of so great a Variety of Objects to work upon, that the Main of our Duty consists in going about to do good. The World lies in Darkness, and it is a hard Task to bring any part of it to Light, and yet a harder to perswade our selves or others to walk as Children of the Light. So that it is more than enough our Charity has to bring some to the knowledge of the Truth: besides that, the Poor, Sick, and Impotent, are continually calling upon us for Help. Add to these the great Duty of offering up continual Prayers and Praises to Almighty God. And if after all this Christianity be not an active Religion, let any Man say what is.

However, I design not by this, at present, to shew the Necessity of an active Life in doing Good otherwise, than to infer from hence the Obligation we lie under of an actual Belief in the Holy Trinity: because through the whole Progress of our Pilgrimage here on Earth,

Earth, there is no Step we make towards our Salvation, but is directed by one or more of those blessed Persons under some distinct Notion ; there is no Consolation, no Hope, no Confidence, but what is peculiarly attributed to one of the three Persons. So that all the Good we do or receive, all our religious Actions and Performances have some special Relation to Father, Son, or Holy Ghost. And this I shall have Occasion to make out at large, under the second Part of this Discourse.

But to the present Purpose. I should think the most indisputable, and by Consequence the shortest, Argument to restrain us in this Case, is that of Duty. For considering how very inquisitive the Nature of Man is, how apt to presume upon the Strength of its own Reason, and how various its Conceptions under different Constitutions, there may be no End of arguing : but where the Obligation of Obedience is laid home to the Conscience, there no modest or ingenuous Man will dispute Submission to what, with a safe Conscience, he may submit. Therefore it ought to be observed, that these Directions, we are now urging, are not persuasive only, but authoritative, such as bear a Stamp of Power.

Nay I should not despair to prevail with a refractory Spirit, from this Topick, if he would give himself ever so little time to think. Not that I should expect to terrifie him with the Fear of Punishment, Indulgences are too cheap for that in these Days ; nor the Apprehension of his Princes Frowns, we have been too familiar with them of late, to be scared at their Looks. But there is something that comes so home, as would make a very indifferent Temper to walk warily in this Point.

Point. Suppose it were an inferiour Magistrate; or but a Master of a Family, would not the Consequence of an ill Example be easily foreseen? If we disobey our Superiours, can we give a more effectual Lesson for those under us to do the like? Since levelling and rebellious Principles have poyson'd the Air of this Nation, it is, with great Grief, to be observ'd, That all Degrees of Subordination are under a like Distemper.

Therefore I hope, for some Reason or other, these Admonitions will be so readily complied with, that the Church may enjoy, what His Majesty design'd by them, Peace and Quiet.

II. The second Part directs the suppressing those bold Discourses, so confidently taken up of late against the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity. The Consideration of which will best be pursued by considering,

1. The Unreasonableness of *Socinianism*.

2. The best Way to suppress it.

1. The Unreasonableness of it will appear upon many Accounts. For if going contrary to the Rules of sound Wisdom and Piety, if offering Violence to Gods Word, if eclipsing his Glory, and promoting *Atheism*, be unreasonable: then *Socinianism* is so. And the better to set it out in its proper Colours, let us proceed by these Three Steps to shew,

(1.) The perverse Method that is taken to support it.

(2.) The clear Proof to the contrary.

(3.) The dreadful Consequences of this Opinion.

(1.) As to the First, I may safely say, That Passion, which cast the fallen Angels out of Heaven, is the same,

same, that has withdrawn the unhappy Disciples of Socinus from the Bosom of the Church. For what is it, but a proud Conceit of the Power and Sufficiency of their own Faculties, which is the Ground of all their Dispute? They will not allow God to reveal any thing beyond the Reach of their own Understanding: If he declares the Mysteries of his Divinity, he must also explain the Reason and Manner of them, or else they will not take him at his Word, but turn their Backs with this contemptuous Answer, How can these things be?

So that I reckon these Men to remain under the desperate Condition of those, from whom the Gospel is hid. For there are three unhappy Constitutions, which blind the Eyes of such, as are under the Enchantment of any of them. 1. They that set up an infallible Judge above, or to controul, the Scriptures; whether in one Person, as the *Papists*; or in every individual, as the *Quakers*, and other *Enthusiasts*: whereby the Word of God is so subjected to the Will of Man, that it becomes a Nose of Wax, no longer to be understood by common Sense and the unanimous Consent of the Church, but as those Judges are pleas'd to expound it. 2. They that are so overborn by their Passions, whom the God of this World has so blinded, that they cannot, they will not see the things, which belong to their Peace. 3. And lastly, They that make their Reason the supreme Judge of what is fit to be believ'd.

Now a *Papist* may be convinc'd of his Mistake, by having the Follies, Errours, and Contradictions of their several *Popes* expos'd to them; and an *Enthusiast* by strong
Phy-

Physick and a severe Diet : Affliction or sober Reflections may open a Sinner's Eyes and shew him the Error of his Ways ; but when a Man is blown up with such a proud Opinion of his own Abilities, that he will allow nothing to be beyond the Reach of his own Apprehension ; this is far the most dangerous Condition of the Three. For you must touch him in the tenderest part, his Understanding, and convince him to be a Fool, before you can make him Wise. A very difficult Task it must be to bring a Man down from the Seat of Judgment to stand guilty at the Bar. Therefore Solomon says, *Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit ?* Prov. 26. 12. *there is more hope of a fool than of him.*

Thus, like a headstrong Horse, when he gets the Bridle in his Teeth, they run headlong without Fear or Wit. Reason is their Pretence, but Passion their Guide : Whilst they boast of pursuing the Dictates of true Judgment, they are mislead by the Dotage of a crazed Nature : through an unwary and rash Partiality to their own Sufficiency, they reject that means, which alone can save them.

There is likewise an unhappy sort of Style, which though, at the first, carries some Shew of Charity, yet by its Disposition must needs prove of pernicious Consequence. For it sets things in a false Light, betrays the Author into too great a Complaisance, and deceives the People into a false Security. This is the more carefully to be avoided ; because naturally we are apt to run into that which pleases : and we ought to consider, that if we are greedy of Applause, it is like to be all the Reward we shall get for our Pains. Let us consider an Instance or two. It is agreed by all sober Men,

that a vertuous and holy Life is necessary to Salvation, not as giving a Right, but as the necessary means to obtain that Right, which is purchased by Christ's Blood. Now, if instead of giving Vertue its due Praises, we should carry it to that Extent, as to leave no Place for

Huberus, a Minister in Switzerland, and afterwards Professor at Wittemberg, about the Year 1600. fell grossly into this Error; and was defended by Fra. Puccius, who took upon him to maintain, That all Men, of any Religion whatsoever, should be saved, if they did not lead a very impious Life and evil Conversation. See William Penn to this Purpose, in his Address to Protestants, 2d. Edit. 1692. p. 118, 119.

any thing else, but pronounce Salvation to all that observe the moral Law, as if Faith and the Bond of Peace were utter Strangers to good Works; we should lead People mightily out of the Way, and would do Mischief therefore upon these Two Accounts. *First*, It

gives too great a Presumption to the corrupt State of Man, to raise its Conceit of having a Power to attain to a sort of Perfection, sufficient to support itself, and thereby to depreciate the Atonement Christ has made for us. And will therefore, in the *second* Place, set up *Deists*, *Socinians*, *Hereticks*, and *Schismaticks*, as an innocent sort of People, that may, by such a vertuous Life as they are able to lead, challenge their Share in Heaven with the best of us. Whereas, if we would study to please God rather than Men, we ought to consult what is most edifying, and not what pleases most. We should make Men sensible of the miserable and corrupt Estate they are in by Nature, of the absolute Dependance we are under, in relation to the Righteousness of Christ for our Justification, and how unprofitable Servants we are, when we have done all we can. We should indeed tell them how necessary good Works are to a lively Faith; but withal to shew Men the Error of their Ways, to let the *Deist* and *Socinian* know, that

that there is no other Name, by which we may be saved, but that of Christ; to give *Hereticks* to understand, that the chief Articles of our Faith are of saving Practice; and to tell the *Schismatics*, that the Breach of the Church's Union is the highest Offence against Charity. This way we express true Friendship, by faithful and plain Dealing: by which means, if we gain not our Brother, we shall save our own Souls.

There is another fawning Practice, which does by no means suit either with the Simplicity or Sincerity of the Gospel; and which therefore ought carefully to be avoided. It is, when we have a Mind to sweeten the sour Tempers of some superstitious People, we are apt now and then, by putting an Affront upon our own Discipline, to pay a Compliment to them. For would it not be so, if we should expose our Ceremonial Ordinances to Contempt and Scorn? Should we expose all Rites in things indifferent as despicable Trash, we know what Inference they, who dissent from us, would make to the Prejudice of our Church; and what an Indignity we offer to Rule and Government. They would say, Are these the mighty *Remora's* that have given such a Check to the Peace of the Church? Is it for such Trash and vile Stuff that we are cast out of the Assemblies? In the mean time our Governours would be little beholding to such Discourse: as if the Stamp of Authority made no Difference in the Use of things indifferent. Whereas with an honest and truly charitable Heart to our dissenting Neighbour, we might lay before him the great Danger and woful Effects of *Schism*, shewing him the Power of Precept in matters of this Nature, from divine Authority. *Submit your selves to every ordinance of man, for the Lords sake.* 1 Pet. 2. 13. What

What I here instance in, may not seem to come up so full to the Head under Consideration: but if we would enquire out of whose Quiver these Bolts come, we should soon discover them to be from the *Fratres Poloni*; and then they will not appear so foreign to our Purpose. For what so natural to those who are contrary to our Faith and Discipline, as to resolve all Obedience into the moral Precepts, and render the Order and Government of our Church odious or ridiculous. Hereby they gain Profelytes, by giving a plenary Indulgence to all Sects and Opinions, making the Articles of Faith of no Force, and, as I may say, turning the Grace of God into Wantonness.

We know the Root of all this Bitterness proceeds from circumscribing the Authority of Revelation within the Compass of our own Reason, whereby God's Determinations are subjected to our Judgment. This is indeed a coarse way of treating divine Revelation: but we find by sad Experience, that these Idolizers of Reason will choose rather to run into *Deism*, *Natural Religion*, and *none at all* sometimes, rather than they will depart from their *Hypothesis*.

The Absurdity of this way of proceeding appears chiefly upon this Consideration, That a Man should stand upon such Terms with his Maker as to question his Authority, Wisdom, or Goodness by asking, *Why hast thou made me thus? What means this? Or, How can these things be?* It were a great Insolence in a private Person to refuse Obedience to the Magistrate, till he gave a Reason for every thing that is enjoin'd. Reasons of State in many Cases are above private Enquiries, the Discovery of which oftentimes would render them of no Force;

Force; and if every Subject will have a particular Account, why these or these things are commanded, before he thinks fit to yield Obedience, there is an End of civil Government.

Besides Man is apt to overvalue himself, and if he be not prefer'd or rewarded sutable to his Expectations, the Magistrate must lie down, and he will insult over him, censure him for Injustice, and deal with him accordingly, when it lies in his Way. If the Equity or Wisdom of Laws must be measured by the Judgment of Individuals, before they are submitted to, they must pass for nothing to the End of the World. For what will please every body? Nay, we see by woful Experience, that it is like a Moth fretting a Garment. The Multiplicity of unsatisfied and unreasonable Spirits is the Plague of Government, and tears it in pieces, when connived at, with the distracted Clamours of Fault-Finders. In like manner is the Church Militant visited by *Heresies* and *Schisms*, the Product of private Spirits weighing all things in their own uncertain Balances.

But to deal plainly, all these Disorders, whether in Church or State, proceed from such Causes in Reality as cannot bear the Light. *Irenæus* affirms, " That all the "*Heresies* in his time took their Original from some hidden Work of Darkness. And it is the same now; for either Pride, Malice, Revenge, Ambition, or some other Corruption of Nature, puts Mens Thoughts upon distinguishing themselves, by some affected way or Principle, that may cover one or more of the most usual Inclinations of our depraved Minds: whereby he will be sure to find a Harvest amongst the Crowds of those, that are lead away by their own Lusts. And therefore I
desire

defie any Man to shew me a schismatical Sect or *Heresie* that does not nourish some beloved Sin or other in its Bosom. Discontentedness, Pride, Malice, Revenge, Tumult, Rebellion, or some other Vice grateful to our corrupt Affections, lies behind the Curtain, as the secret Mover of all such Devices. So that whoever is of all Religions, is of *Julian's*, who by his inordinate Indulgence hugg'd the Church, *as the Devil hugg'd the Witch*, and went as far as the Gates of Hell to destroy it.

But is it to be imagin'd, that all Societies in the World should conspire to put a Restraint upon private Judgments, were it possible to reconcile their Pretence to Peace and Order? What drives us into Commonwealths and under Dominions, but that single Men are not able to govern or protect themselves? Were it otherwise, how comes it to pass, that no Faction, even upon these licentious Principles, could ever yet be carried on, but by a common Consent of some Number of People? Tho' mostly for want of due Subordination and Deference, they prove like those Fire-works, which mount into the Air for a short time in one body, till the Violence of Heat breaks them into several parts, which at last scatter into small Particles, that vanish away in Smoke.

Now if God has taught us by the Constitution of the World, how Fellow-Creatures, for their own Safety and Advantage, are obliged to comply, and submit one to another; surely it ought to teach us better Manners and more Wit, than to dispute with the Almighty. He who cannot be unjust, who cannot be deceived, neither can he be controul'd; his Word, methinks, should pass for a Law with such, as have any Modesty, or any true Apprehension of his being. Especially when

when he has so graciously discover'd the Original of our miserable and corrupt Estate, and at the same time revealed to us a means to heal our Breaches. For thus he has humbled us, that we may be exalted; if we will not exalt our selves to our own Ruin.

However, there is a more subtle and sly way of shaking the Foundations of our holy Religion, not by asserting *Socinianism* in downright Terms, and calling the plain Words of Revelation in Question; but by taking off the Power and Verrue of those Articles, and weakening the Reasons in their Defence. Which in this Respect is far more dangerous and pernicious, forasmuch as it lets in the Plague amongst us, under the Colour of sound Principles. They that go out from amongst us, are fair Gamesters, and play above-board; whereby we have timely Notice to stand upon our Guard: but these like *Joab*, while they take us friendly by the Beard, smite us under the fifth Rib. They pretend to go hand-in-hand with us, and set up for Champions of the fundamental Articles of our Faith; and in the mean time so order the matter, as to betray all into the Enemies Hands. Sometimes they bluster with their *eupeng's*, as if all the World had been asleep, till they awoke; they reject all Reasons that have been given before, and vouch for one of their own coining, which they can invalidate at Pleasure. Sometimes they will have the high Mysteries of our Religion bare speculative Notions, true indeed, but of little or no Weight in the Concern of our Salvation. At other times, they will set the whole Frame of our Confession so loose, that a small Blast may blow it down. And all this from their own private Conceits, out of a Design to become popular

*Tuta frequens
que via est.*

at the Cost of Truth and the Churches Peace. For Experience tells us, when Mens Heads are thus set a Wool-gathering, the certain Fruit of it is, to despise Dominions, and speak Evil of Dignities. Indeed such Management not only destroys the Peace and Beauty of the Church, but highly endangers Religion itself. For what Thoughts can Men have of such a divine Revelation, or the Author of it; whose Truth may be turn'd into all Shapes, and exposed to a Thousand contradictory Constructions? Were it so in the Civil Laws of a Nation, that every Man should be his own Interpreter, how he would understand them, and be at Liberty to act accordingly; what a Confusion, worse than Anarchy, must follow! No Property, no Right, no Life can be secure. But when the fatal Event is at a distance, as in Matters of Religion, though of never so much a greater Concern, our Senses are not quick enough to apprehend such remote Inconveniences, as we ought to do.

What if this indifferent way of expounding Articles of Faith gain more Profelytes, than a severer Method; ought this, if well consider'd, to have any Weight with a true Christian Spirit? For whilst we do our Duty, we have nothing more to expect from this World, but its Hatred. And therefore it looks liker a compassing Sea and Land, considering what sort of People they gain Credit with; than what they would have it seem to be, a generous Enlarging of the Bounds of Charity. I take *Episcopius*, *Curcellaus*, *Limborch*, and such like Writers, to be the great Fomenters of this loose sort of Divinity. They do indeed make a Shew of asserting the Doctrine of the Trinity; but (alas!) it comes to nothing. For
when

when they should set forth the Excellency of it from the gracious Influence it has upon the means of our Salvation, they sink into the beggarly Constructions of *Palagius* and *Socinus*. They make Original Sin but a transient Punishment, and proportion the Efficacy of Christ's Satisfaction and the Sacraments accordingly. So little do they allow his Sufferings to be a full, perfect, and sufficient Sacrifice, Oblation, and Satisfaction for the Sins of the whole World; that they only allow them the Privilege of entitling him to a Mediatorship by Way of Intercession, and not of Merit. And then of what Use the Sacraments may be, the little or no Value they put upon them, shews all to be of a piece. They have indeed so shatter'd the whole Frame of the Gospel, and dispirited the Constitution of it; that they have, at best, left but a Form of sound Doctrine, denying the Power thereof.

Therefore it is neither wise nor safe to tamper with such Authors, who assume to themselves a Privilege of altering the stated Phrases and Expressions of the Church; which has been the first Practice of most Hereticks for insinuating their Errours. The Principles of our Religion should be taken from the most agreed and publick Authority, that can be had, Councils, and the common Language of all national Churches, with such private Authors, as have had the Modesty to write after those Copies. If after this, Leisure and Inclination dispose to a farther Enquiry; there can be no Danger for a sober and discreet Man, once settled upon such a solid Foundation, to be shaken with any Wind of Doctrine that may blow upon him. Though unsteady and biassed Minds will be carried away in spite of Caution;

yet the gentle and easie to be intreated will this Way certainly be fixed. For we are not to marvel if the World hate us, since it first hated the Captain of our Salvation; if there be such Swine as will turn upon those, that cast Pearl before them: since we are so fully warned, that such there will be, and that it is impossible but Offences must come. Still we are to strive for the Truth, and not to be terrified with the boisterous Revolutions of wavering Minds, during our sojourning here on Earth; where, as Strangers and Pilgrims, we are to pass thro' Briars and Thorns, as well as smooth Paths; crooked and perverse Generations, as well as those that set their Heart aright. It is too near the Church Triumphant to look for a thorow Reformation here below: let it suffice to bear up against the Gates of Hell; whilst we are assured, they never shall prevail against us. And I hope, what has been said, may prove, a fair Step towards putting us into so good a Posture; especially, if that Great and Learned Person may be hearkned to, whose Moderation has ever been ac-

(a) Ego
non inutile ar-
bitraver edi-
aliquid tum
super isto ar-
gumento, tum
super altero sa-
tisfactionis:
ne sola novita-
tis prurigo ra-
tione incinuncu-
lis titil anti-
bus suffulta ve-
ra catholicaq;
sententia fi-
dem apud ali-
quos deprehendat.
Tandem sane
majoris faciendus est consensus antiquitatis, quando turpius quotidie lahi eos videmus, qui jus no-
vandi sine fine aut modo sibi vindicant. Epist. 72.

counted his weak Side; I mean *Grotius* (a) in his Epistle to *Gerard Vossius*. "I should not think it amiss to publish something upon this Subject, as well as that of Satisfaction; lest the bare Itch of Novelty supported with a few little enticing Arguments, should shake the Faith of some in the true and Catholick Opinions. And so much the more ought we to value the Consent of Antiquity, as we daily discover their Failures, who without Bounds or Measure take upon themselves a Privilege of innovating.

(2.) There.

(2.) Therefore we are to examine whether there be not a clear Proof of the blessed Trinity, sufficient to convince so many, as take those modest Steps, which ought to be made in an Enquiry of this Nature. For we must not think, by our circumscribed Reasoning, to fathom the Depths of this great Mystery. That were to bring the Power of an infinite Being very low indeed. But the unbounded Distance betwixt infinite and finite, should possess us with more humble Thoughts, and make us rest abundantly satisfied in Gods Word, without a Question. For it is not our Purpose now to encounter *Spinoza*, or any of that Kidney, who dispute the Divine Authority of the Holy Scriptures; but taking that for granted, to consider what sort of Arguments are fit to be made Use of, for directing us to the right Belief of them.

The Word of God diverts us from vain Philosophy and the Disputes of human Reasoning. St. Paul calls them, *Vain janglings*. When our Saviour directs a Method for Information of his Truth, he says, *Search the Scriptures*. Which the *Bereans* observed to their particular Commendation. We are not therefore to trust to our private Reasonings, where we shall be bewildred in the Mazes of our dark Understanding under the notions of Idea's and other obscure and fictitious Terms, which would lead us into poor and blind Conceits of judging the things of God by weak and beggarly Fancies, that may delude us into a Conclusion, that nothing is beyond us, because we can see no farther: but let us trust to that Light, which God has sent into the World to dispel that Mist of Darkness, which cover'd the whole Earth, before he was graciously pleas'd to renew the Face of it by his Revelation. That

1 Tim. I. 6.

Job. 5. 39.

Act. 17. 11.

Joh. 3. That Passage concerning *Nicodemus* is a pregnant Instance of how despicable a Reach the simple Reason of Man is, when it presumes to stand upon its own Legs, and looks not up to the Powers which are above it. Christ tells him, *Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of Heaven.* What a gross Answer does he make from the bare Suggestion of his natural Reasoning? *How can these things be? How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mothers womb, and be born?* Jesus answered and said unto him, *Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? Hast thou been so long educated under Moses and the Prophets, who spake by the Dictates of the Holy Spirit, and yet pretendest to find out the Ways of God by thy Mother Wit; and therefore not to understand them, because that fails? Alas! Thou art quite mistaken. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.* Flesh and Blood can no more discern these things, than inherit the Kingdom of Heaven. *The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.* If we will understand these things, we must not consult our own shallow Breasts, but the Oracles of God in the Power of his Word. *When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me; until I went into the sanctuary of God: then understood I.*

1 Cor. 2. 14.

Psal. 73. 16, 17.

So far therefore as the Church has explain'd this great Mystery, was not at all meant to comprehend it; but in general Terms, to that Degree as our weak Apprehensions

ensions could reach, to shew at large how it may be without a Contradiction, though we cannot reach to the Depth of it. For we first believe that it is so upon Gods Word, which is infinitely beyond all other Evidences; and then shew, in some measure, at large how it must be, to make it consistent with the eternal Power and Godhead, and to obviate those Mistakes and Heresies, which might be rais'd from private and foolish Expositions.

But it was never intended by us to undertake the full Discussion of this Point and all its Proofs. It may suffice to lay down some of the most pregnant Authorities out of Scripture [1.]; and afterwards name a few of the most easie and familiar Authors [2.]; who have set the Texts in the clearest Light, for the plain Discovery of this Article.

[1.] The Faith therefore of this great Mystery begins and ends in the Word of God. We believe it is so, because God has said it. For when all that can be said, has been discuss'd upon this Point, the whole Reason of our Belief concludes in our having the Word of God for it. If we hold that *one Faith*, we must derive it from one common Evidence; or else we shall set up as many Creeds as there are Diversities of Fancies and human Reasonings in the World. Neither are we to imagine that the Spirit of Truth would have suffered to pass so plain Words, to misguide our Faith in so essential a Part. In great Humility therefore as to our own Understandings, and full Assurance in Gods Word, we ought cheerfully to confess (a) *God manifest in the flesh.* (b) *God blessed for ever.* Who said, (c) *Before Abraham was, I am.* (d) *The brightness of Gods glory,* and

Eph. 4. 5.

(a) *1 Tim. 3. ult.*

(b) *Rom. 9. 5.*

(c) *Joh. 8. 58.*

(d) *Heb. 1. 3.*

(e) *Hib. 1. 1. and the express image of his person, &c.* (e) *By whom*
 (f) *v. 8. also be made the Worlds.* Unto whom it is said, (f) *Thy*
 (g) *Joh. 10. 30. throne, O God, is for ever and ever.* Who said, (g) *I*
 (h) *Joh. 1. 3. and my Father are one.* By whom (h) *all things were*
made, and without him was not any thing made, that was
made. Who is called in Scripture by that sacred and
 (i) *Gen. 19. peculiar Name of the High God, (i) J E H O V A H.*
 24. *Psal. 110.* (k) *Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and*
 3. *Jerem. 23.* shall call his name Immanuel. Of the Holy Ghost it is
 6. *Eccl. 33. 16.* said to Mary by the Angel, when he told her how she
 Compare *Zech. 14. 9. with* should conceive, (l) *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee,*
Ephes. 4. 5. and in several other Places. and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee. (m)
 (k) *Isa. 7. 14.* The Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father. (n)
 (l) *Luk. 1. 35.* The blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven
 (m) *Joh. 15. 26.* unto men. It is he which sanctifies, (o) *Being sanctified*
 (n) *Matt. 12. 31, 32.* by the Holy Ghost. (p) *When he the Spirit of truth is come,*
 (o) *Rom. 15. 16.* he will guide you into all truth. (q) *The Spirit is Life.*
 (p) *Joh. 16. 13.* He spake by the Prophets, (r) *For the Prophecie came*
 (q) *Rom. 8. 10.* not in old time [or at any time] by the will of man: but
 (r) *2 Pet. 1. 21.* holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.
 Indeed the eternal Power of the Holy Ghost is held forth
 thorow the whole New Testament. And that the Fa-
 ther, Son and Holy Ghost are three distinct Persons,
 I will name but these two Portions of Scripture. (s)
 (s) *Matt. 28. 19.* Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the
 name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.
 (t) *1 Joh. 5. 7.* (t) There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father,
 the Word, [*ὁ λόγος,*] and the Holy Ghost: and these three
 are one. This is our Faith in this Article of the blessed
 Trinity, built upon the eternal Word of God, which
 cannot deceive us.

[2.] And now we might proceed to shew, if there were the least Obscurity in this Revelation, that this Doctrine has been delivered down to us thorow all the Ages of the Church: but it shall suffice at present to direct to some few Authors, who have most clearly and succinctly treated upon this Point. For it would swell this Discourse into too great a Volume, should we set down the Opinions of the several Writers, from the first Ages, down to our own Days. And whatever that learned Jesuite *Petavius* fancied to the contrary, we have as plain Instances of this Doctrin held in the Ages before the Council of Nice, as since. Of which there are pregnant Instances in (a) *St. Ignatius* his Epistles, (b) *Justin Martyr*, (c) *Meliton*, (d) *Athenagoras*, (e) *Irenaeus*, (f) *Clemens Alexandrinus*, (g) *Tertullian*, (h) *Origen*, who is very Orthodox in this Point, in some part of his Works, however he might forget himself or be imposed upon in others; (i) *St. Cyprian*, (k) *Gregorius Thaumaturgus*, (l) *Arnobius*, and others. It would be impertinent to name the Fathers after that great Council, because there is none of them, but have either designedly or occasionally asserted this Doctrin in terms unquestionable.

Ad Genoes. Adversus Marcion, l. 3, & 4. Adversus Praxeam, de carne J. Christi. (h) Comment. in Job. tom. 1. Homil. 6. in Jerem. Contra Cels. l. 2, & 6, &c. (i) De vanis. idolol. Ad Quirinum. (k) Formula fidei in vita auctoris per Greg. Nyss. Sermo in Baptismum Jesu Christi. (l) Lib. 1, 2.

However, it may not be amiss to remove some Prejudices that have been taken against these primitive Writers, which has, with too many, taken off, or in a great Measure abated from, that due Reverence, which ought to be paid to them. I shall instance in two.

1. They are apt to except against their way of writing, as too loose, especially when argumentative. But this is a Cavil too large to be admitted, because in all Ages there has been great Difference between the Style and Spirit of one Writer and another: so this can be objected to no time, but with such a Distinction, as may do every Author Right. Some are to be recommended for their Sharp and Quick Parts, others for their Solid and Plain manner of Writing, and others for their Close and Judicious Way of expressing themselves. That many of the Fathers had their Mistakes and Infirmities, must be acknowledg'd; however, not near so many as any present Age must needs have, because Time consumes a great deal of that Dross and Trash, which is imposed upon the World. Besides, it does appear, from all which has been deliver'd down to us from those times, that then the Great Men in the Church, who wrote in her Defence, were of great Holiness of Life, Simplicity of Manners, full of Sincerity and Truth. From which we may conclude our selves safe in them, as Witnesses of what they saw, and was practis'd in their Days. And as to their Judgments, we have *Tertullian* in an eminent manner, whilst he continued in his Senses, and *St. Basil*: not to exclude the rest from their Share, who have generally expressed themselves in sober and good Thoughts; and had certainly a great Advantage of making a Judgment of any thing that happen'd in those Days, because they were better acquainted with the fresh Circumstances upon which their Opinion was to be grounded.

2. The next Exception is to their Choice of Scripture-Proofs, which seems to be brought in too hastily and unadvisedly now and then, as if the Force consisted in

in the Number and not in the Weight. But this I take to be a rash and unjust Censure, especially in Reference to the Subject we are now upon. For I do believe amongst all the number of Places which are quoted by the Fathers, there is scarce one, but what, some way or other, helps to prove the Article asserted. Nor that every Text brought for this purpose is to be taken for a Demonstration: but they all have their Weight in some Proportion. That Portion of Scripture which by itself would signifie nothing, when enlightened by others that speak plainer, may have its Share in making good the Assertion. So many Texts, that can prove nothing single, well put together may make a strong Argument, and, under the Banners of the clearest and most bearing Proofs, overthrow the stoutest Adversaries. *Sic quæ non profunt, singula juncta juvant.*

And therefore this Objection is often made out of Craft and Design. When any of the Socinians or their humble Companions have a mind to overthrow an approved Doctrine by a Side-Wind, under pretence of some masterly Argument of their own, they will despise and reject all others that have been urged before theirs, as if they alone had found out the infallible Touchstone of Truth: and thus for a while they will triumph in their own happy Invention, till at last when they shall have drawn you off from the Scent of other Arguments, they come with a *salvo jure*, and either by Palliation, Accommodation, or some reserved Provision, overthrow the Structure of their own Building, and laugh to think what Fools they have made of their Admirers. If I speak a little darkly in this matter, it is no more than what I design'd, because I know as many will understand it, as should do, and the rest are better without it. How.

ever, this treacherous Way of dealing will, in a little time, I am apt to believe, be laid so open, as he that runs may read.

But to make good my Promise, I shall mention a few Authors upon this Subject, that may be easily had, and not take up much time in reading. For we have no design to inform those that have Leisure and Opportunity to search into all the voluminous Authors upon this Controversie; it were impertinent to attempt it, besides that our present Discourse was never intended to go that Length. Let it suffice therefore to give a little Help to such of our Brethren, whose Continuance in the University has been short, and Means not so large, as to give them time to examine more than what was absolutely necessary to furnish them with a compendious Notice of the Principles of the Christian Religion. And this will be done in a very little Room. For I shall only mention a few Authors that may be easily had, and not take up much time in Reading; the largest of them not exceeding a reasonable Octavo.

The first Book I would recommend of this small Collection, is, 1. *A Conference between an Orthodox Christian and a Socinian*; because it lays down all the fundamental Proofs and Authorities of this Controversie in the plain Texts of Scripture, the directest Evidence of Truth, as being God's own Testimony. 2. And because it is a small Book, though in Latin and of Antiquity, I will name *Faustinus Presbyter ad Gallam Placidiam de Trinitate, &c.* 3. *The Defence of the Trinity*, in a short Sermon preach'd by Dr. Barrow of Trin. Coll. Cambridge, 120. a succinct, clear Discourse, for so much as there is of it. 4. There is likewise a very plain and easie Letter in An-

swer to a Book, Entitled, *Christianity not mysterious*, written by Mr. Brown B. D. and Sen. Fellow of Trin. Coll. Dublin. 5. *The Vindication of the Doctrin of the Trinity*,

written by Dr. Stillingfleet, late Bp. of Worcester, where the Point is handled to as nice a Degree as in all Modesty it can bear. 6. We have Dr. Bull's *Judicium Ecclesiae*

Catholicae trium primorum seculorum de necessitate credendi, &c. contra Episcopium; a well written and learned Book.

7. There is something towards a Confirmation of this, very well done in short, call'd *The Fathers vindicated touching the Trinity*. 8. But that which I will crown all these Discourses with, is *The Judgment of the ancient Jewish Church against the Unitarians*. A Treatise of such ab-

struse Learning, that the Idolizers of the *Polish Fraternity* know not where to lay hold on it; and of so clear an Evidence, that it dazzles the Eyes of our most learned Adversaries. I must confess I never read any thing of that kind comparable to it; and, if I may guess at anothers Relish by my own, it strikes the Mind with an unexpected Satisfaction. These, I presume, will be sufficient for those who have only occasion to be furnish'd with defensive Weapons for this Combate, and no more is intended.

(3.) But if the Universal Consent of all Christian Churches in all Ages to so manifest a Truth were not sufficient, the Detestable Consequences of the opposite Doctrines will certainly take off their so much conceited Edge. For as Aaron laid the Children of Israel naked before *Moses* to their great Shame, whilst they were holding a Feast to their Golden Calf, so have these Oppugners of God's great Truths exposed themselves to their utter Confusion, by running themselves into most abominable

minable Opinions in Derogation to the Divine Power and Attributes. I do not mean what Consequences others may draw from their Principles, but what shameful and blasphemous Doctrines they themselves raise up on their own Foundations. Dr. Edwards in his *Preservative against Socinianism*, in three Parts, in 4to. Printed at Oxford, has laid them fully open.

I shall therefore only mention such horrid Assertions as they have drawn from their first Errours. 1. (a) They deny God's Ubiquity to be otherwise than virtual. 2. (b) They deny his Omniscience. 3. (c) Consequent to this, they deny his Immutability, by making him to change his Purposes for Want of Fore-Knowledge. 4. (d) They deny his Justice, by asserting, that there is nothing in his Nature to exact a Punishment for Sin. Which results from denying Christ's Satisfaction, and that from denying his Godhead. 5. (e) They assert, that God, notwithstanding his positive Declaration to the contrary, may shorten the Punishment of Sin by making it finite. 6. (f) They affirm God to have Affections and Passions like Men. These seem to be the immediate Product of idolized Reason, which will allow nothing to be out of its own Reach.

Other Opinions there are, which so necessarily follow upon the denying the Godhead of Christ and of the Holy Ghost, that they are forc'd to take them up, tho at the same time it has run them out of Christendom. Upon this Account they deny 1. (g) Original Sin. 2. Upon which Account they affirm Man still to be entirely possessed of (b) Freewill, so as to be by Nature in a Power

(a) Socin. de Dei essentia cognitione. Crollius de Dei immensitate, &c.

(b) Crollius de natura Dei cap. 24. Socin. Praeleth. Theol. c. 8. & 18. Anonymus in capp. 5. priora Matth. advers. 28. c. 5. Valent. Smalcus in Refut. Theol. Wolfangi, &c. disput. 12. pag. 427. Videj. Fred. Spanhem. Dub. E. var. 33.

(c) Socin. de Off. hominis Christiani. cap.

11. (d) Soc. Disput. de Christo Servatore, part. 1. (e) Soc. de Christo Servatore, l. 1. (f) Crollius c. 31. p. 324. Episcop. Inst. Theol. l. 4. c. 22. Limborch.

(g) Catech.

Racov. Smalcus.

h) Catech.

Racoviensis.

Institutio brevis.

Volkelius.

de vera religione.

Socin.

tract. breviss.

us 4. de libero arbitrio.

power of perfect Obedience. 3. And therefore no need of (q) Infant Baptism to wash away Original Sin. 4. Neither had Adam in his State of Innocence other (r) Original Righteousness than we all now enjoy. 5. So that Christ had no need to (k) satisfy for our Sins. 6. (l) We are justified, not by the Grace of God, but by our natural Strength. 7. (m) No need then of the sanctifying Assistance of the Holy Ghost. 8. From which Assertions they conclude, that we have no Participation of Grace by the (n) Sacraments. 9. That (o) Baptism is a bare outward Sign. 10. And that the (p) Lord's Supper has neither Respect to the Confirmation of our Faith nor Remission of Sins. (i) Cambr. Racov. Inst. brevis. (k) Cat. Rac. Guttichius. (l) Soc. in Resp. ad Cutenum, & alibi. (m) Cat. Rac. Soc. de libero hom. arbitrio. (n) Smole. in erroribus. (o) Cat. Rac. Inst. brev. Soc. in Ep. 3. ad Mar. Raderum. (p) Cat. Rac. Soc. de Cana Dom. & alibi.

Thus presuming upon their own Strength have they hewn out to themselves Cisterns, broken Cisterns, which will hold no Water. Such Doctrines have they raised, as would offend a sober Heathen, to see Gods Attributes so elipt and mangled, as to render him, not the God of the whole Earth to do Righteousness and Judgment, but one of their own making, confined to the Limits of their own Reach. Whereby they have taken away all the Glory and Comfort of the Gospel, in making the Blood of the Covenant an unholy thing; and, assuming to themselves a Self-Justification, have rendred the Mediatorship of the meanest Value.

2. The best Way then to stifle this Antichristian Error, is

1. To make a serious Reflection upon the deplorable Condition of these Men, who think themselves too good to be taught of God. To think in what a shameful and despicable Shape these Adorers of Reason have drawn

drawn God ; and to judge from thence what desperate Madneſs it is to circumscribe God within the Compaſs of our own Reach. For what a Monster of Deficiency muſt it be, to find a God without Holineſs or Juſtice, ſhort-ſighted, under a local Confinement, miſtaken in his Aim, ſubject to Paſſion, and what not ? What will a Man, that has the Fear of God before his Eyes, and through a juſt Contemplation of his immense Majeſty, trembles at his Name, reſolve in this Caſe ? What will any Wiſe Man think ? After a mature Conſideration of the whole, can he recommend his own Wit and Strength of Reaſon, as ſufficient for theſe things ? In no wiſe. He will certainly diſcern what pitiful Work they make of it, who would frame the Divine Being and all its Diſpoſitions by the Scantling of their own Underſtanding. To ſuch may we aptly apply the Pſalmiſt's Words, when he ſays, *Set not up your ſelves on high, and ſpeak not with a ſtiff neck.* We muſt learn of Chriſt to be meek and lowly, if we will find Reſt to our Souls. For it is evident to thoſe that walk humbly with God, what nonſenſical and blaſphemous Work ſuch Men make of it. There cannot be a readier Courſe to ſet Men right, than by ſhewing them the Danger they are in by continuing in the Wrong. When they ſee what Filth and Naſtineſs, what poiſonous and helliſh Vapours ariſe all along the Way they are going : When they ſee what Monsters they have begotten out of their own Brain.

2. And that which would make a truly Wiſe Man ſtill deteſt them more, is, that after all theſe Affronts offer'd to God and his Holy Attributes, they ſet up for the exacteſt Obſervers of his Commandments. For they have ſet out very excellent Precepts of Morality :
and

and would deserve to be commended for it, if they had not done it for a Cloak to their Unbelief. But all this ado is to deceive by a Light which we have not Strength to walk by, and divert us from that which enlightens every Man that comes into the World. They turn our Faces from the Gospel where our Strength lies, to the Book of Nature which we read to our own Shame and Confusion, for Want of Power to fulfil the Dictates of it. Thus they make a fair Shew in the Sight of Men, to take off the just Prejudice against their false Doctrines, and what they do in earnest is, in Defiance of Gods Grace, to exalt the conceited Power of their Natural Faculties.

3. But that which discovers the Shamefulness of their Extraction, and, by Consequence, creates still a greater Abhorrence for their Doctrine, is, the Consideration whence they had it. If they deny the Divinity of Christ, *Cerintus*, who held the World to be made by Angels, and taught a *Mahumitan* Paradise of Carnal Pleasures after the Resurrection, did the same; and so did the *Judaizing Ebionite*. *Origen* has gain'd so many Friends by having done well in many things, that I shall pass him by. *Paulus Samosatenus*, and after him *Photinus* were of the Opinion that Christ was not, before born of the Virgin Mary. The *Eunomians*, who were *Antinomians*, denied the Godhead of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. *Manes*, Father of the *Manicheans*, held some such Doctrines, as Modesty forbids to relate, and others so foolish and absurd, as, that there were two Gods, a Good and a Bad, their Substances mix'd in all our Meat and Drink, the Sun and Moon to be two great Ships, and a great deal more of the like Stuff, that it were impertinent to reckon them up: and as he outgoes the *Socinians*

in some Points, so in the Sacrament of Baptism he makes just as little of it as they do. The *Arrians* seem not to go so far as their Successors, but their Doctrines come all to the same Conclusion, and their History shews them to have been fully as good-natured. The *Macedonians* denied only the Divinity of the *Holy Ghost*. *Donatus*, that Archschismatick, made the Son and the *Holy Ghost* less than the Father. And what if *Pelagius* do not openly deny Christ's Godhead, he denies the Power of it by disowning Original Sin, Justification by Christ's Merits, Grace, and the like. These are recorded by *S. Augustin* amongst the infamous *Hereticks* of his and the precedent Ages, and these are the first Brewers of *Socinian* Doctrines. *Epiphanius*, *Eusebius*, *Philaster*, and others, may be farther consulted about this matter: but I suppose it more useful to consult *Vincentius Lirinensis* how to distinguish Truth from Falshood.

4. Since the Church has condemn'd the *Unitarian* Principles in *Hereticks* of all Times, it is a sufficient Conviction for a modest Man to sit down by; but that Qualification being rare amongst the Sons of Men, there is another Observation, I should think, would make them be abhor'd of all Men, that have any Sence of Vertue or Goodness left in them. They say a Man is known by the Company he keeps; and if so, let us enquire who they are that drink in their Doctrines like Water, and belch them out again to the Corruption of all good Manners both in Church and State.

If we meet with a *Libertine*, an *Atheist*, or a *Deist*, all their Ingenuity is employ'd in letting fly at *Christianity*, and all their Arrows taken out of the *Socinian* Quiver. This Magazine furnishes them with subtle Wea-

pons

In catalogo
Heresium, t. 6.

Nos. etur ex so-
cio.

pons, such as have the Name of Religion inscribed upon them, and yet wound it mortally at every Stroke. They stand up for the Prerogative of innate Virtue and the uncontroll'd Liberty of Reason, from which they infer, with a plausible Colour, that the Understanding must not be bak'd, Inclinations must not be check'd, no Restraint laid upon the Will; so that, in short, Man has a Privilege to do what he will, and how he pleases. They are supply'd with sophistical Argumentations to blaspheme that Holy Name, by which alone we can be saved, and to ridicule all the Ordinances of Grace for that Purpose; whereby that gracious Building rais'd up by God for our Redemption is deprived of that chief Corner-Stone which alone should support it.

If we examine where the *Independents* have learn'd their schismatical Lessons, the *Anabaptists* their contemptuous Treating of the Sacraments, the *Quakers* their horrid and blasphemous (a) *Invectives* against the whole Institution of Christianity; we shall find them all instructed out of the *Racovian Catechism*. Which duly examin'd must needs make all sober Men loath the Perswasions of these arrogant Pretenders to Reason.

(a) See
The Snake in
the Grass, Sa-
tan disrobed,
and several o-
ther Treatises
of the like na-
ture.

But if they shall say these Opinions are never the worse for being made an ill Use of, because the best often are so served; I would allow the Excuse, were not the Mischief and Malice in the Opinions themselves. For it is not the *Atheist* or disorderly Person that perverts them against their Nature, they are in themselves fitted for that very Purpose: which appears from these three Reasons that I shall urge, for banishing them out of Christendom.

That a Man ought to know himself before he can rightly understand any thing else. For otherwise he will be to seek what Power or Faculty may be most proper to apply for attaining his End, and may by Consequence employ that which will lead him out of the Way. He therefore that would pursue his Religion wisely and with Succels, should impartially examine his own Strength, and where he finds it to come short, cast about to see what Help may be had elsewhere. He may easily conceive what an incomprehensible Distance there is betwixt finite and infinite, himself and God the Object of his Worship. He will as easily perceive, by a patient Enquiry, how much that finite Strength, we were created with, is impaired by Sin, when he sees another Law in his Members warring against the Law of his Mind, and bringing him into Captivity to the Law of Sin which is in his Members. What has he then to do, but to humble himself mightily before God through a deep Sense of his own Weakness, and lay hold on him, whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins. How cheerfully will he then kiss the Hand that offers Help, and choose rather to adore than question the great Mysteries of Divine Revelation! Let him learn of S. Paul how to behave himself in the midst of this unruly World, that he be not carried away with the vain Presumptions of assuming Men. For we dare not, says he, make our selves of the number, or compare our selves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves amongst themselves, are not wise. But we will not boast of things without our measure, but according to the measure of

the

Rom. 7. 23.

Rom. 3. 25.

Cor. 10. 12.
13.

the rule which God has distributed to us, a measure to reach even unto you.

There is another Degree of Modesty which becomes every sober and wise Man, which is the Deference owing to Antiquity. If it be well considered what occasions these Distractions and mad Divisions the Church groans under at this time; it will be found, that the inordinate Liberty Men have taken, of starting up new and unheard of Conceits in Religion, has consecrated all the vilest Affections and Lusts in Nature. Therefore it is with an excellent Spirit *Grotius* expresses himself upon this Occasion. “ (a) God knows my Endeavour “ is to preserve some moderate Freedom in religious “ Controversies; without which, Separations upon “ Separations will certainly arise. But as for those “ Opinions which the Ancient Church has condemn- “ ed, no Man abhors them more than I do. *Vincen- tius Lirinensis* his Rule to discover the Truth will ever take Place with sober Men, *Quod semper & ubique & ab omnibus*. For since there is no end of Controversie and Dispute, through the infinite Variety of Imaginations, and the Shortness of Mans Judgment, especially in things spiritual: what surer Way have we to come by the Truth of Gods Word, than by submitting to the universal Consent? It is the Way chalked out for us by the Word of God itself, *Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls*. And if we will seriously observe what dangerous Absurdities they run into, who pretend to be their own Guides, vainly puffed up with their own Imaginations; we shall soon submit to the Truth of *S. Paul's* Words, *If any man among you* 1 Cor. 3. 22

seemeth

(a) Scio
Deus id me a-
gere, ut modica
quedam
Theologicis
controversiis
retineatur li-
bertas, quâ
sublatâ necesse
novas ex seces-
sionibus seces-
siones fieri.
Ceterum ab
iis dogmatibus
quæ vetus Ec-
clesia damna-
vit neminem
magis abhor-
rere. Ep. 77.
G. J. Vossio.

Jerem. 6. 16.

seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. Would it not be ridiculous for a Man to deny any thing to be red or green, till it were made appear to him whether Colour were a Substance or only a Shadow; or that should deny Plants to come from Seeds, before it were plainly shewed him how it was done? Much more would it be unreasonable to question the plain Words of Scripture, till Satisfaction were given how the thing so signified could be; since it is enough that God has said it, to make it true. For as he cannot be deceived, so ought we to rest assured that he will not deceive us nor express his saving Truths so obscurely, as to tempt an humble Soul to question the Meaning of them.

2. It is certainly incompatible with true Christianity to hold such Tenents, as overthrow the Power and Life of it. For those fundamental Articles which the Socinians oppose, are the Subjects of a practical Belief, such as works out our Salvation. Thus when they deny the Godhead of our Saviour, they are forced to deny his Satisfaction; because such a sort of Merit as communicable Righteousness, whereby we are justified before God through the Blood of the Covenant, can have no Author less than God himself. For what Creature, however great and perfect, can vindicate to itself a greater Merit, than what will answer the Obligation it has to its Creatour, since it has receiv'd all from him? Therefore it is the first and greatest commandment, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.* So that when these Gentlemen were gone so far as to deny the Divinity of Christ, it was but Ingenuity in them to deny that he bought

bought them. And then to what a mean Consideration is Redemption brought!

But in this Case we are as little beholden to those that would make these great Articles barely speculative. For that which makes them most dear and precious to us, is, the practical Good we reap by them. That highly comfortable Promise to our first Parent after his Fall, the Promise to *Abraham* for his incomparable Faith, the several gracious Predictions and Assurances under the Old Testament, and the whole Constitution of that Economy, the wonderful and glorious Declarations of a Mercy so admirable and so strange, that the Angels were desirous to look into it, because they could not comprehend it, these and all other the sure Supports of a Spirit truly sensible of the dreadful Distance his corrupt Nature has set him at from that God, who is of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity, are sunk and lost by the perverse Doctrines of these Men. The actual glorious Performances under the Gospel by our Saviours Miracles, Obedience, and Sufferings, the high Expressions of what Christ did, and yet does, for us, if they are not allow'd to have that Force and Energy the Church has always attributed to them, our Hopes would prove vain, we should be yet in our Sins. The eternal Son of God came down from Heaven, taking our Nature upon him by the wonderful Conception of the Holy Ghost upon a pure Virgin, *God manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.* These are the efficacious Dispensations that put Life and Health into the inward Man. The just and grateful Remembrance of these things sanctifie the blessed Sacraments,

to us for the washing away of Sin and pouring into our Hearts the Grace of Charity. Where are those Incentives to an exalted Love, if Christ died not for our Sins and rose not again for our Justification, in a direct and plain Sense ! Indeed, where is the Reliance for our Faith ! Where is the Foundation for our Hope ! When a poor Sinner, laden with Transgression, comes to cast his Burthen before the Throne of Grace, finding his Spirit overpower'd by the Flesh, what Means can a Socinian propose to him for his Relief ? He can only tell him, that a great Prophet has reveal'd wonderful Means for leading a Holy Life ; but that he must pluck up his Spirits and set to work, for that he has natural Strength to deliver him from this Thralldom, if he please. And what a miserable Comforter must this be to a languishing Sinner, that finds he has no Strength to deliver himself ! Therefore he must not, neither will he, when he has look'd into the Gospel Promises, take the Word of these Men. There he finds a powerful Redeemer, God as well as Man, making Intercession and giving full Satisfaction for the Sins of the whole World. There he is told how to come to the Knowledge of Truth, when he hears our Saviour say, *The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things.* *I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever ; even the Spirit of truth.* When he hears S. Paul say, from the same Authority, *That the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.* From all which he concludes what a blessed Effect the Belief in the Son and the Holy Ghost has, by those refreshing
and

Joh. 14. 26.

v. 16, 17.

Rom. 15. 16.

and saving Dispensations they shed upon him. And his Reflection upon this must needs move his Indignation against those, who have so depreciated his Profession, and wrested the Glory of God from it.

3. What I said before concerning the pernicious Consequences of these bold and hardy Doctrines, may, some part of it at least, by an easie Reflection, serve to suppress the Growth of them. For if it be but observed what a diametrical Opposition these and the Gospel-Rules stand in, which, God willing, upon a Review of what I now write, shall be more clearly and fully done, I make no Question but the Difference will appear as great, as between Light and Darkness. The Gospel teaches Unity and Consent, that we should be all of one Mind, speak and even think the same things: the Foundation of Christian Charity is the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace, to avoid all Divisions and Separations, as the Sources of every evil Work. Whereas we learn nothing from the Socinians, but such Lessons as instruct us to comply with *Heresies*, and indulge *Schisms*. Thus *Anabaptists*, *Independents*, *Quakers*, and almost all the *Sects*, that have infested the Church in these later Times, are taken within their Verge, whereby they compass Sea and Land to gain Profelytes, and become popular to all the Strolers in Religion. From the Plenitude of this assumed Power they dispense with all Blasphemies against Truth, and all Irregularities against Good Order, Peace, and Charity, making Allowance for every Sect to keep the Commandments with an Exception to such as may prejudice their Constitution, and by an incomprehensible Comprehension make up a Gallimaufry sutable to the Palate of a loose and profane

(a) A Rhetorico quodam exortam Heresim, dicit Philaster, nimium mirabilis vanitatis, quae omnes Hereticos re-
de ambulare & vera dicere affirmat: quod ita est absurdum, ut mihi incredibile videatur. Lib. de Heres.

2 Cor. 1. 18.

ch. 2. 17.

Age. But S. Austin does not seem to approve of such Principles, when he tells you, (a) "That Philaster reports of a Heresie set up by one Rhetorius of too wonderful a Conceit, affirming that all Hereticks were in the Right, and spake the Truth: which is so absurd, says he, that it seems to me incredible. Though, if he had liv'd in our Days, he would not have been so incredulous; when it is the common Theme of all the Libertines, whereby to appear, what least they are, good natured. Besides no Man can tell how many evil Practices false Doctrines may produce: and I wish we did not see and feel it in this divided Nation. S. Paul did not dodge after this fashion. *As God is true, says he, our word toward you was not yea and nay. For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God, but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.*

4. Not to take Notice of those Laws which are made to suppress the impudent Vouching of these pernicious Principles, I shall conclude with the Method most powerful with God and Man utterly to destroy them, and that is by leading a holy and uncorrupt Life. We must convince the World by our Lives and Conversation, how far Grace exceeds Nature in the Performance of our Duty. For it will plainly appear by the Course of our Behaviour on whose Side that God will be, who *resists the proud, and gives grace to the humble.* He that acts by Grace pays an entire Obedience to Gods Will without Reserve; but he that depends upon the Strength of Nature, when he falls under the Lash of Wickedness in high Places, shifts and turns his Morals to the best Advantage for keeping himself out of Harms Way.

He

He that acts by Grace does all things with the greatest Humility and Self-Denial, acknowledging himself an unprofitable Servant, when he has done all he can: Whereas the other with a high Look boasts of his Self-Sufficiency, and demands his Reward as of Justice to his own Demerits. In short, the one acts like a Penitent Sinner, and the other like a Proud Pharisee. And therefore whoever can subdue the Insolence and Pride of his own Heart, will soon reject the *Racovian Catechism*, and heartily joyn with the Church in that devout Collect upon *Trinity-Sunday*.

Almighty and everlasting God, who hast given unto us thy servants grace, by the confession of a true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the power of the Divine Majesty to worship the Unity; We beseech thee, that thou wouldst keep us stedfast in this faith, and evermore defend us from all adversities, who livest and reignest one God world without end, Amen.

Your most assured Friend

and Brother,

H. London.

F I N I S.

141
The same lady Grace does all things with the greatest
purity and self-denial, and always giving himself an
unwearable servant, which he has done all his life;
whereas the other with a high look boasts of his
self-sufficiency, and demands his Rewards of Justice
to his own Damage. In short, the one is a
Pious Saint, and the other like a Proud Pharisee.
And therefore whoever can induce the Infidel, and
Pride of his own Heart, will soon reject the Christian
Catholic and lastly join with the Church in that
devout College upon Trinity Sunday.

Angels and celestial God, who have given us
the power of the Holy Spirit, by the gift of a true faith
to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and
in the power of the Divine Majesty to worship the
Father. We beseech thee, that thou wouldst keep us
 steadfast in this faith, and become established in it, as
those who are in hope, and might, one God would
inducement, Amen.

Your most affixed Friend

and Brother,

A. Lawson.

THE END

